

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 220431

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FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN JIDDA KUWAIT LONDON
PARIS TEL AVIV EC BRUSSELS OECD PARIS FROM TOKYO 8 NOVEMBER
REPEATED

QTE S E C R E T TOKYO 14576

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, JA

SUBJ: ISRAELI CONCERN FOR POSSIBILITY JAPAN MAY YIELD TO ARAB
PRESSURES

REF: TOKYO 14575

1. AT HIS REQUEST, ISRAELI AMBASSADOR RONN CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
NOVEMBER 8 TO EXPRESS CONCERN FOR PRESSURES BEING PLACED ON GOJ
FOR CHANGE IN MIDDLE EAST POLICY. RONN DESCRIBED PRESSURES AS
COMING FROM THREE DIRECTIONS: A) FROM ARAB COUNTRIES AND PRIN-
CIPALLY SAUDI ARABIA WITH OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING MILITARY SUPP-
LIES FROM JAPAN AND FORCING GOJ TO TAKE CLEAR PRO-ARAB STAND.
IN THIS CONNECTION, RONN REFERRED TO REPORTS THAT SAUDI ARABIA
HAD MADE EITHER EXPLICIT OR IMPLICIT DEMAND THAT GOJ BREAK DIPLO-
MATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. B) POLITICAL PRESSURES WITHIN JAPAN
DERIVING PRINCIPALLY FROM PREOCCUPATION OF CONSERVATION LEADER-
SHIP WITH COMING UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS AND CONCERN THAT OIL
CRISIS MAY FURTHER AGGRAVATE INFLATIONARY PRESSURES AND PROVIDE
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PAGE 02 STATE 220431

OPPOSITION WITH ISSUE FOR ATTACKING GOVERNMENT PARTY. C)

RIVALRY BETWEEN MITI MINISTER NAKASONE AND FOREIGN MINISTER OHIRA WITH FORMER SUPPORTED BY SOME JAPANESE OIL COMPANIES AND OTHER BUSINESS INTERESTS PRESSING FOR CHANGE IN GOJ POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST.

2. RONN HAS CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT FOREIGN MINISTER OHIRA THUS FAR HAS STOOD FIRMLY ON POSITION THAT OIL MUST BE CONSIDERED AS ONLY ONE FACTOR IN JAPAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT IN DEALING WITH PRESENT PROBLEM JAPAN MUST ALSO KEEP IN MIND IMPORTANCE OF ITS RELATIONS WITH U.S. ACCORDING TO RONN, FOREIGN OFFICE HAS BEEN INSISTING THAT PRESENT OIL CRISIS CANNOT BE SOLVED BY YIELDING TO ARAB PRESSURES AND BY FOLLOWING "UNILATERAL POLICIES." IN OPPOSITION MITI HAS BEEN INSISTING THAT SOLUTION OF OIL SUPPLY PROBLEM MUST BE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE AND REQUIRES CHANGE IN GOJ POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST.

3. RONN COMMENTED THAT THUS FAR FOREIGN OFFICE HAS BEEN ABLE TO HOLD THE LINE BUT IS APPREHENSIVE THAT IT MAY BE OVERRULED BY MOUNTING POLITICAL PRESSURES. FOR THE MOMENT, RONN SAID, IT HAS BEEN AGREED BETWEEN THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND MITI THAT THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN JAPAN'S POSITION UNTIL SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS VISITED TOKYO. RONN SAID THAT IT IS NOT CLEAR TO HIM WHAT GOJ EXPECTS TO EMERGE FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY. CERTAINLY GOJ WILL WISH TO HEAR SECRETARY'S ASSESSMENT OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION AND PROSPECTS FOR SOLUTION OF ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT. IT IS RONN'S IMPRESSION THAT GOJ HOPES (MISTAKENLY, IN RONN'S VIEW) THAT IF MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL CRISIS CAN BE RESOLVED QUICKLY, PROBLEM OF OIL SUPPLY WILL BE RESOLVED THEREBY. IN ANY EVENT, RONN FEELS, GOJ IS HOPING THAT SOME PROSPECT FOR MEETING OIL SUPPLY PROBLEM OVER NEXT SIX MONTHS (I.E., THROUGH PERIOD OF UPPER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN) WILL EMERGE FROM DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARY. RONN HAS CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT INTERNAL GOJ POLICY DEBATE WILL BE REOPENED WITH FULL FORCE FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S VISIT WITH MITI AND ARAB STATES STEPPING UP PRESSURE FOR POLICY SHIFT SUPPORTED BY JAPAN OIL LOBBY AND POSSIBLY BY OPPOSITION CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT. ANTICIPATING THIS SITUATION, FOREIGN OFFICE IS UNCERTAIN HOW LONG SUCH PRESSURES CAN BE CONTAINED. RONN STATED THAT FOREIGN OFFICE HAS ARGUED THAT JAPAN IS PROHIBITED BY CONSTITUTION FROM EXPORTING MILITARY MATERIEL AND ALSO IS OPPOSED TO BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATION WITH ISRAEL.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 220431

FOREIGN OFFICE EFFORT TO CONTAIN PRESSURES FOR POLICY CHANGE THEREFORE PROBABLY WILL BE DIRECTED TO IDENTIFYING STEPS IN BETWEEN THESE TWO EXTREMES WHICH MIGHT SATISFY THE ARABS.

4. RONN BELIEVES THAT ARAB STATES CALCULATE THAT JAPAN IS THE WEAK LINK IN THE "WESTERN CAMP." HE REMARKED THAT ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS JAPAN HAS MADE CONCILIATORY MOVES IN RESPONSE TO ARAB PRESSURES AND THAT BY CONTRAST WITH SITUATION IN WESTERN EUROPE,

THERE IS LITTLE OR NO PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN JAPAN IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL AND CERTAINLY NO COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE EC COUNTRIES MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF UNITY IN RESPONSE TO ARAB PRESSURES, THERE IS THE NECESSITY FOR REACHING A COMPROMISE AMONG NINE GOVERNMENTS WHO HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS AND ARE RESPONDING TO DIFFERENT INTERNAL PRESSURES, A SITUATION WHICH DOES NOT OBTAIN IN JAPAN.

5. RONN EMPHASIZED SEVERAL TIMES THE VIEW THAT OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES AND SOME IN WESTERN EUROPE NOW ARE WATCHING JAPAN CAREFULLY AS A "TEST CASE" OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARAB PRESSURES. HE FEELS THAT IF JAPAN WERE TO YIELD A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD FEEL OBLIGED, OR FREE, TO FOLLOW SUIT. HE HAS THEREFORE BEEN URGING JAPAN TO STAND FIRM, USING THE ARGUMENT THAT YIELDING TO ARAB PRESSURES WILL NOT RESOLVE JAPAN'S OIL PROBLEMS BUT PROBABLY ONLY SERVE TO AGGRAVATE THEM BY ENCOURAGING THE OIL PRODUCING STATES TO BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN WITH IMPUNITY ALTER PRICE OR SUPPLY AT ANY TIME TO SUIT THEIR OWN PURPOSES. HE ALSO HAS CAUTIONED THE JAPANESE AGAINST STARTING DOWN THE ROAD OF COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE TWO EXTREME COURSES OF ACTION WHICH THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS IDENTIFIED, POINTING OUT THAT ONCE JAPAN MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION IT WILL BE HARD TO DRAW THE LINE. HE HAS URGED THE GOJ TO CONTINUE TO ACT IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AND THE MAJORS.

6. AMBASSADOR INGERSOLL EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR AMBASSADOR RONN'S APPRAISAL OF THE SITUATION IN WHICH JAPAN FINDS ITSELF AND NOTED THAT GOJ OBVIOUSLY IS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED FOR THE DIFFICULTIES OF ITS POSITION, FEELING THAT IT HAS VERY FEW CARDS TO PLAY. AMBASSADOR RONN COMMENTED THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE CONSTRAINT AGAINST THE GOJ MOVING "TOO FAR" CONTINUES TO BE U.S. INFLUENCE AND FOR THAT REASON, HE WISHED THE AMBASSADOR TO HAVE HIS FRANK APPRAISAL OF THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE IN GOJ

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 220431

POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST. AMBASSADOR INGERSOLL ASKED THAT RONN KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH US AS THE SITUATION EVOLVES AND RONN READILY AGREED TO DO SO.

7. COMMENT: RONN'S ASSESSMENT OF PRESSURES BEING EXERTED ON GOJ POLICY CONFORMS CLOSELY TO INFORMATION EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FROM SOURCES WITHIN GOJ (SEE REFTTEL).

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